

THE
NON-CONFORMIST'S
PLEA
FOR
UNIFORMITY.

Being the Judgment of Fourscore and Four Ministers of the County Palatine of *Lancaster*. Of a whole Provincial Assembly of Ministers and Elders, in and about *London*. And of several other eminent Preachers, *English*, *Scottish* and *New-English*, concerning Toleration and Uniformity in matters of Religion.

Together with a Resolution of this difficult Question;
Whether the Penalty of the Law ought to be inflicted
on those, who pretend and plead Conscience, in
opposition to what the Law commands?

Video meliora proboque, Deteriora sequor.

Mr. *Cafe* Farewel-Serm. on *Rev. 2. 5.*
*Time was, when the name of a Toleration would have made
Christians to have trembled.*

LONDON,
Printed for *Henry Brome*, at the Gun in *St. Pauls Church-*
yard, 1674



THE
NON-CONFORMIST'S
P L E A
FOR
UNIFORMITY.

IN the Book called *The Harmonious consent of the Ministers of the Province, within the County Palatine of Lancaster, with their Reverend Brethren, the Ministers of the Province of London in their late Testimony to the Truth of Jesus Christ*; printed in the Year 1648, and subscribed by 84 Ministers, whose names are printed with the said book; we have these expressions among several others to the like purpose. *pag.* 11, 12, 13.

A 2

'For

pag. 11.

‘ For our own parts, as we can never sufficiently admire and wonder, that any, that have taken the solemn *League and Covenant*, could either have so quickly forgotten it, or else imagin that the establishing a *Toleration* of *Heresy* and *Schism* by a Law, should be the way to extirpate them; so also here we shall take occasion to declare, what our apprehensions are concerning such a *Toleration*.

‘ We have searched the *Scriptures*, looked as impartially as we could into those *authentick Records*, and yet we cannot find, that ever such a thing was practised with approbation from God, from the time that *Adam* was created upon the Earth, unto the sealing up of the sacred *Volume*: but on the contrary, that those were blamed, reprehended and checked, that did but continue and wink at the practise of those things that were displeasing unto God; that the not taking away the high places is mentioned as a defect in their *Reformation*, of whom yet God gives testimony, that their hearts were upright, and that those that quite took all away that was distastful to him, were by God himself highly honour’d, and much commended. And therefore we cannot see how such a kind of *Toleration* as is endeavored after in these times, can any way consist with a thorough *Reformation* according to the *Word of God*; there being nothing more contrary to *Reformation* than *Toleration*.

pag. 12.

‘ A *Toleration* would be the putting of a Sword into a *Mad-man*’s hand, a cup of *poysen* into the hand of a *child*; a letting loose of *Mad men* with *Fire-brands* in their hands; an appointing a *City of Refuge* in mens *Consciences* for the *Devil* to fly to; a laying of the *stumbling block* before the blind; a proclaiming liberty to the *Wolves* to come into *Christ*’s fold to prey upon

Rev. 2. 14.
15, 20.

1 King. 15. 14.

2 Chron. 33.

17.

2 Chron. 17. 6.

31. 1. 34. 3. 4.

‘upon the *Lambs*; A *Toleration* of Soul-murder (the greatest murder of all) and for the establishing whereof damned Souls in *Hell* would accurse men on *Earth*. Neither would it be to provide for tender *Consciences*, but to take away all *Conscience*. If evil be suffered, it will not suffer good; if error be not forcibly kept under, it will be superior.

‘The establishing of a *Toleration* would make us pag. 13.
 ‘become the abhorring and loathing of all nations;
 ‘and being so palpable a breach of our *Covenant*,
 ‘would be the high road-way to lay *Englands* glory
 ‘in the dust, and awaken against us the *Lord of Hosts*
 ‘to bring a Sword upon us, to avenge the *Quarrel* of Qu. 26. 25.
 ‘his *Covenant*. A *Toleration* added to our other
 ‘sins would make us to God an *intolerable* burthen;
 ‘He would doubtless think of easing himself, he would
 ‘be weary of Repeating.

In the Book called *A Vindication of the Presbiterial Government and Ministry*; Published by the Ministers and Elders met together in a Provincial Assembly, Novemb. 2. 1649. licensed, entered and printed according to order, in the year 1650, We have these expressions among several of the like nature. pag. 124, 140.

‘That Doctrine that cryeth up *Purity* to the ruine pag. 124.
 ‘of *Unity* is contrary to the Doctrine of the *Gospel*; 1 Cor. 1. 10.
 ‘for the *Gospel* calleth for *Unity* as well as *Purity*: and Phil. 2. 1, 2.
 ‘*Christ* prayed for the *Unity* of the Church as well as Eph. 4. 3, 4, 5.
 ‘the *Holiness*. And it is prophesied of the times of the Joh. 17. 21, 22.
 ‘*Gospel*, That in those days *God will give his people one* Jer. 32. 29.
 ‘*way to serve him with one consent*. This Rule will Zeph. 3. 9.
 ‘teach you what to judge of the *Congregational* way;
 ‘for certainly that *Religion* that carrieth in the front
 ‘of it a *Toleration* of different *Religions*, and is not
 sufficient

The Non-Conformists Plea

'sufficient to keep the Body of *Christ* in *Unity* and *Purity*, is not the *Government of Christ*.

pag. 140.

'To make *Ruptures* in the body of *Christ*, and to 'divide *Church* from *Church*, and to set up *Church* against *Church*, and to gather *Churches* out of true '*Churches*; and because we differ in some things, therefore to hold *Church-communion* in nothing; this we 'think hath no warrant from the word of God, and 'will introduce all manner of *Confusion* into *Churches* 'and *Families*; and not only disturb, but in a little 'time destroy the power of *Godliness*, purity of *Religion*, peace of *Christians*, and set open a wide gap 'to bring in *Atheism*, *Popery*, *Heresy*, and all manner of '*Wickedness*.

Mr. *Thomas Edwards* in the first part of his *Gangrana*, printed in the year 1646; whose judgment in this particular has not only the Approbation and Recommendation of Mr. *James Cranford*, printed with the said Book; but of a huge number of Ministers from all parts of the Nation very largely exprest in their several Letters, sent to him the said Mr. *Edwards*, and still remaining upon Record in the second and third Parts of his *Gangrana*: So that what He has written in this particular is not to be looked upon as his own single judgment, but as the judgment of very many others, signified by his pen. He writes his judgment in these words. pag. 58, 59, 85.

pag. 58.

'A *Toleration* is the grand design of the *Devil*, his 'master-piece and chief engine he works by at this 'time to uphold his tottering Kingdom; it is the 'most *Compendious* ready sure way to destroy all *Religion*, lay all waste and bring in all *Evil*. It is a 'most *transcendent*, *catholick*, *fundamental evil*, for 'this Kingdom of any that can be imagined. As original

'ginal sin is the most fundamental sin, all sin, having
 'the seed and spawn of all in it: So a *Toleration* hath
 'all *Errors* in it, and all *evils*; it is against the
 'whole stream and current of *Scripture* both in the
 'old and new *Testament*, both in *Matters of Faith*,
 'and *Manners*, both general and particular com-
 'mands; it overthrows all *Relations* both *Political*,
 'Ecclesiastical and *Oeconomical*; and whereas other pag. 59.
 'evils, whether errors of judgment or practise, are
 'but against some one or few places of *Scripture* or
 'Relation, this is against *All*; this is the *Abaddon*, *A-*
 'polyon the destroyer of all *Religion*, the *Abomination*
 'of desolation and astonishment; the liberty of per-
 'dition (as *St. Austin* calls it) and therefore the *Devil* fol-
 'lows it night and day, working mightily in many by
 'writing books for it, and otherwayes, all the *Devils*
 'in *Hell* and their Instruments being at work to pro-
 'mote a *Toleration*.

'A *Toleration* will undo All. First, bring in *Scepticism* pag. 85.
 'in doctrine and *Looseness* of Life, and afterwards all
 'Atheism. O let the Ministers therefore oppose *Toler-*
 'ration, as being that by which the *Devil* would at
 'once lay a foundation for his Kingdom to all genera-
 'tions, witness against it in all places, possess the
 'Magistrates of the evil of it, yea and the people
 'too, shewing them how if a *Toleration* were gran-
 'ted, they would never have Peace in their *Families*
 'more, or ever after have command of *Wives*
 'Children, Servants; but they and their poster-
 'ties after them are like to live in discontent
 'and inquietness of mind all their dayes.

The same Mr. *Edwards* in the year 1641 printed a
 Book, entituled, *Reasons against a Toleration*, in
 which Book he gives ten *Reasons* against it, and an-
 swers

The Non-Conformists Plea

swers all those *Reasons* that were brought for it. In the year 1644 the said Mr. *Edwards* printed another Book, called *Antapologia*; towards the close of which Book, viz. from p. 280. to p. 307. he does give eight other *Reasons* against a *Toleration*. And in the year 1647 He printed a book consisting of 218 pages concerning the *Unlawfulness and Mischiefs* both of an universal *Toleration* of all Religions and Consciences, and of a limited and bounded, of some *Se&ts* only; called, *The casting down of the last and strongest hold of Satan, or a treatise against Toleration, and pretended Liberty of Conscience*.

Mr. *Daniel Cawdry* a member of the late *Assembly of Divines*, in his book called *Independency a great Schism*, printed in the year 1657, useth these expressions, pag. 13, 14, 15, 17.

pag. 13.

‘The Commonwealth of *Israel* never prospered
‘better then when it enforced *Uniformity* in the
‘way of *Religion* prescribed.

To the objection that *Uniformity* enforced is the readiest means in the world to root out all *Religion* from the hearts of men; He returns these several answers.

pag. 14.

‘1. That it was by God thought the best way to
‘plant and preserve *Religion* in the hearts of the *Jews*.
‘Those great *Reformers* so famous among them, *Josiah*, &c. are recommended for compelling of people, and binding them by Oath to serve the
‘Lord.

‘2. The *Parable* of compelling men to come into
‘the *wedding* seems (in the judgment of no mean *Divines*) to allow a power to bring men to the publick
‘ordinances of *worship*.

3 *Toleration*

' 3. *Toleration* (which is our present condition)
' hath done much more towards the rooting of *Re-*
' *ligion* out of the hearts of many men in seven years,
' then the enforcing of *Uniformity* did in seventy
' years.

' 4. To compel *Uniformity* (in a true or false way) pag. 15.
' may by the corruptions of mens hearts breed *Hipocri-*
' *sy*, *Formality*, *Atheism* and *anxiety of Conscience*
' in some; but good and gracious Souls have been
' discovered and purified by it, as the *three Children*
' and *Martyrs* have manifested.

' 5. Many, at least some that were enforced to *con-*
' *formity* in the *Worship* of God, in *Families* or *Con-*
' *gregations*, have blessed God for that compulsion, who
' before were *Atheists* or *Profane*, while they had a
' cursed *intolerable toleration* to be of any or no *Reli-*
' *gion*.

' Lastly, the will indeed cannot be forced to be-
' lieve; but that professed *Christians* should be com-
' pelled to that external profession of that only
' way of *worship*, which *Christ* has instituted, seems
' as equal and reasonable, as it is unreasonable that
' men be left to their own choice, to worship God
' either not at all, or after their own fancies. And
' he that denies this seems to men to be, if not an
' *Atheist*, a *Sceptick* in *Religion*.

' I would know why the enforcing *Uniformity* is pag. 17.
' called by the name of *bloody persecution*. Surely to
' enforce *conformity* to the way of God is not *persecu-*
' *tion* much less *bloody*; but it is a just *persecution* of

B

' evil

The Non-Conformists Plea

‘evil and refractory rebels to the Kingdom of
‘*Christ*.

Mr. *William Ashton* in his book called *Toleration* disapproved and condemned, printed the second time in the year 1670 gives an account of 20 eminent Divines (most if not all of them members of the late *Assembly*) declaring and by convincing arguments proving, the great evil of a *Toleration* in their *Sermons* before the Parliament on Solemn occasions.

Mr. *Samuel Rutherford*, Professor of Divinity in the University of *St. Andrews*, in his Book called *A Free Disputation against pretended Liberty of Conscience*, with these expressions, p. 98, 99. ‘Such opinions and practices as make an evident *Schism* in a
‘*Church*, and set up two distinct *Churches* of different
‘forms of Government, and pretending to different
‘institutions of *Christ*, of which the one must by the
‘nature of their principles labour the destruction of
‘the other, cannot be *tolerated*. For each pretending their *fellow Churches* to be of man, and so of the
‘Devil, though they should both make one true invisible *Church*, agreeing in all *Fundamentals* and
‘many other *Truths*, yet sure the whole would be a
‘kingdom divided against it self, and that destroy-
‘eth peace and unity. And if *Paul* could not endure
‘the divisions of one and the same *Church* of *Corinth*,
‘though they pretended not to be different *Churches*,
‘for those that said they were of *Paul*, professed they
‘could not be Disciples of *Peter*, but he sharply rebuked them as *carnal*, and such as divided *Christ*,
‘and by consequence must say that *Paul* was crucified
‘for them, and was their *Redeemer*, and so if obsti-
‘nately

pag. 99.

pag. 99.

'nately they had proceeded in that *separation*, Paul would have gone on to higher censures of the Church; far more could he not endure the gathering of true Churches out of true Churches, which is the professed practice of the *Independents*. From p. 145. to p. 236. of the same Book, the said Author does produce sixteen several arguments against *Toleration* or pretended liberty of Conscience, and does answer such Objections as might be raised against them.

Mr. *Thomas Shephard*, Pastor of the Church of Christ at Cambridge in New-England, in his Book called *The- ses Sabbatica*, or *The Doctrine of the Sabbath*, printed in the year 1655, thus declares his judgement, p. 311, 312.

'It's a thousand times better to suffer persecution pag. 111.
'for righteousness sake and for a good conscience, then pag. 112.
'to desire and plead for *Toleration* of all Consciences,
'that so by this cowardly device and lukewarm principle our own may be untouched. It was never
'heard of till now of late, that any of Gods Prophets,
'Apostles, Martyrs, faithful Witnesses, &c. that they
'ever pleaded for liberty in error, but only for the
'truth, which they preached and prayed for, and
'suffered for unto the death, and their sufferings for
'the Truth with zeal and patience, faith and constancy, have done more good then the way of universal
'*Toleration* is like to do, which is purposely invented to avoid trouble. Truth hath ever spread by opposition, but error, being a child of Satan, hath
'fled by a zealous resisting it.

Edwards Rea-
sons against
Tolerat. p. 32.
and Antapol.
p. 289.

In the Answer from *New-England* to the 32 Questions, sent by some *Lancashire Ministers*, who disliking the Ceremonies of the *Church*, and having some thoughts of leaving their Countrey, did propose it to those of *New-England*, whether they might have liberty according to their *consciences* to go into a *Church* way, something different from theirs, and not altogether after the *Independent popular Government*: 'Tis replied, ' That they could not grant ' any other form of Government but one, seeing there ' is but one way of *Church-Government* laid down in ' the Word, and that unchangeable, and therefore ' they cannot yield to it.

Now as concerning this Question, Whether the penalty of the Law ought to be inflicted on those who pretend conscience, in opposition to what the Law commands? Mr. *John Humphrey* in his Book called *The Authority of the Magistrate about Religion discussed*, printed in the year 1672, has resolved it thus, p. 113, 114.

pag. 113.

' When men pretend they make a *conscience* of a ' thing, and indeed do not, I would have the *Ma-* ' *gistrate* above all men to execute the Law upon ' such, (supposing they judge the Law righteous) ' and make them an example. If you will say, But ' how shall the *Magistrate* know this, seeing no man ' can judge of anothers heart? I acknowledge rea- ' dily that this is a difficulty, and the chief thing ' which requires the *Magistrates* prudence and faith- ' fulness: Yet this I say, that every man for all that, ' being *judge* of his own acts, and the punishing or ' forbearing a person, being what the *Magistrate* ' does

‘does, he must and can but go according to his *judg* pag. 114.
‘*ment*. He uses the *mediums* as a wise man does,
‘and lawfully may take his conjecture, (the tree is
‘known by his fruit) and it is not necessary that it
‘should be certain, but only that it be certain that he
‘so judges, and if he be convinced in his soul, and
‘indeed judges the mans profession only to be pre-
‘tence, it is his own *judgement*, and nothing else can
‘determine him. Although where the person is se-
‘rious in what he declares, and not under any pub-
‘lick note of perfidiousness, the rule of Charity,
‘*which hopeth all things and thinketh no evil*, must in-
‘cline him to the best construction,

Mr. *Jeremiah Burroughs* had given the same *Resolu-
tion* in effect long before, in his Book called *Irenicum*,
printed in the year 1646. p. 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34,
35, 36.

The *Devil* must not be let alone, though he be got
into mens *Consciences*. God hath appointed no Ci-
ty of Refuge for him; if he flies to mens *Consciences*
as *Joab* did to the *Horns* of the *Altar*, he must be
fetch'd from thence, or fallen upon there. Some-
thing may be done to keep them from evil, and to
reduce them, notwithstanding the plea of their *Con-
sciences*. This said, he does proceed to shew what
may be done to a man in such a case. These things,
he says, may be done.

‘1. Any man that pleads his *Conscience*, may be pag. 30.
‘required to give an account of his *Conscience*. It is
‘not enough for him to say his *Conscience* puts him
‘upon such a thing, or keeps him from such a thing,
‘he

The Non-Conformists Plea

‘ he must give an account of the grounds on which
 ‘ *Conscience* goes. It is against the light of nature that
 ‘ men in society should do things of which they need
 ‘ give no account to any whatsoever.

‘ 2. Due enquiry is to be made whether the *Devil*
 ‘ be indeed in the *Conscience*. It may be you will
 ‘ find him in some other room of the soul, only he
 ‘ pretends to that as his *Sanctuary*, hoping to escape
 ‘ better there than any where else. If he should be
 ‘ found in a mans *Will*, he thinks he should be hunted
 ‘ out with violence, he could not escape there, but
 ‘ he hopes men will deal more tenderly with *Consci-*
 ‘ *ence*; therefore either thither he will get, or at
 ‘ least he will give it out that he is got in there, ho-
 ‘ ping you will enquire after him no further, when it
 ‘ is given out he has taken *Refuge* there. As a *Male-*
 ‘ *factor* searched after, it may be he is lurking in some
 ‘ house not far from you, but that you may either
 ‘ not search, or cease searching, he causes it to be
 ‘ given out that he is got into some strong *Castle*, or
 ‘ some other *Countrey*, where there is little hope to
 ‘ come at him.

Hereupon he puts the Question, by what signs it
 may be known whether the *Devil* be got into a mans
Conscience? It may be known he tells us by these
 signs.

‘ 1. If a mans private *Interest* is much engaged in
 ‘ what he pretends *Conscience* for, this may be enough
 ‘ to raise suspicion, though it be no determining
 ‘ Rule, &c.

‘ 2. If

'2. If in the Course of a mans life, he appears pag 31.
'not to be much under the command of his *Con-*
'science, but can take Liberty as he pleases,
'&c.

'3. When the account a man gives, cannot in
'any rational way be judged such, giving allow-
'ance to all his weakneses, as should probably
'mislead him so grossly, as is apparent he is misled,
'&c.

'4. If a man be proud and turbulent in his car-
'riage; by that you may know the *Devil* is ra-
'ther in the *Will*, then in the *Conscience*, &c.

'5. When a man is not willing to make use of pag. 32.
'means to inform his *Conscience*, &c.

'6. When a man by reason of *Scripture* is so put pag. 33.
'to it, as he must either renounce his *Error*, or
'fly from some of his own *Principles*, he will ra-
'ther deny his *Principles* then yield himself con-
'vinced of his error; The man that does thus, is
'the man spoken of *Tit. 3. 11.* that is *ἄνθρωπος ἀποστόμωτος*
'condemned of himself. *A Heretick after the first*
'*and second admonition reject*, because he is self con-
'demned. By this *Scripture* it is clear that a
'mans *Conscience* may be so far seen into, as there
'may be a judgment passed upon a man, that he
'is a self condemned man, &c.

Having enlarged upon these signes he declares yet
further what may be done to such a man.

'Notwith-

The Non-Conformists Plea

‘Notwithstanding his *Conscience* he is to be cast
 ‘out of the *Society of the Saints*; and not only so,
 ‘but if his *error* with the profession of it be de-
 ‘structive to the *State*, and he cannot be reclaim-
 ‘ed, he may likewise be cut off from it; or at
 ‘least deprived of the priviledges of it, and bene-
 ‘fits by it, notwithstanding his Plea of *Consci-*
 ‘*ence*.

And least it should be thought that he herein
 spake only of the restraint of men from dan-
 gerous gross evils and not from evils o f less mo-
 ment; He does add concerning such; That,

‘A man may be put to some trouble in those ways
 ‘of evil, that his *Conscience* puts him upon, so far
 ‘as to take off the wantonness of his spirit and the
 ‘neglect of means: In times of liberty there is
 ‘very great wantonness in mens Spirits; they stand
 ‘as in an equal *ballance* to receive *truth* or *error*; e-
 ‘very little thing casts the *ballance* in many mens
 ‘Spirits: as interest in a friend; esteem from such
 ‘men of repute in some; in others the credit they
 ‘conceive there is in being able to speak further
 ‘in a business than other men, to have a further
 ‘insight into it than others; and a thousand the
 ‘like: Now to help against such temptations, if
 ‘there be some trouble layed in the way, of that
 ‘which is apparently evil, so as men shall see there
 ‘is something to be suffered in that way; if there
 ‘be no more grains of trouble then may help
 ‘against the wantonness and neglect of means, I
 ‘see no reason why any should be offended at
 ‘this.

Mr.

Mr. James Noyes, that judicious and faithful Minister of Christ; for so the Publisher of his book has been pleased to style him; Colleague to Mr. Thomas Parker, Pastor of the Church of Newbury in New-England, has in like sort declared his judgment for the punishing of offenders, notwithstanding their Plea of Conscience, in his book called *Moses and Aaron*; recommended by the said Mr. Thomas Parker, and here published in the year 1661. by Mr. Benjamin Woodbridg, who at that time thought fit to style himself *Reſtor* of Newbury in the County of Berks. The said Mr. James Noyes, pag. 69 and 70, discoursing of the power of *Magistrates* over the Church, under Christ the Head, does affirm,

‘ That *Magistrates* have a supream power under Christ to see the whole Law of God kept without exception: That it is the *Magistrates* duty to reform all abuses without exception: That it is the *Magistrates* end to punish and to put away all evil; to maintain all godliness and peace among all persons: That *Magistrates* receive power from Christ as *Mediator*: All power is given to him, and therefore comes from him, and is given by him to others: And *Magistrates* receive power from Christ without exception in a politick way, therefore their power is correspondent to Christ’s *Mediatorial* power in a politick way; else the Church would be desolated with *Heresies*, *Idolatry*, *Prophaneness*. It is needfull that *Magistrates* should have power to preserve the Church from desolation by taking away *Foxes* and *Wolves*, &c. and their power is nowhere limited in this respect; and therefore they

pag. 69.
Deut. 17. 19.
Numb. 27. 21.
Eſ. 1. 25, 26.
2 Chron. 15.
30. 24. 4.
29. 25.
Neh. 13. 13.
Joh. 3. 11.
Hof. 9. 30.
10. 3.
Ez. 6. 8, 11.
Dan. 6. 23.
Deut. 17. 10, 11.
Rom. 13. 4.
2 Tim. 2. 2.

C

‘ have

'have such power, as to take away Foxes and
'Wolves, &c.

pag. 72.

And in p. 72. to the Objection, That *Magistrates* may not punish sins of *conscience*, he returns this Answer, That *they may*; which he there proves at large by fourteen several Arguments, p. 72, 73, 74, 75. viz. thus:

'Sins committed by the misunderstanding of *Gods Word* may be punished, therefore sins of *conscience* may be punished. A plea from *Gods Word* is greater than a plea of *conscience*. The Jews might have been punished for their killing of *Christ*, though they pleaded from *Gods Word* that he had deserved it by *blasphemy*.

Mat. 26. 52.

Act. 26. 6.

'2. Men may be punished when they sin in *Religious zeal*; so *Saul* murdered the *Gibeonites*, and the *Jews Christ*. Zeal argues a love of duty, and an apprehension of *conscience*, in reference to *Gods command*. *Peter* was threatened with death by the sword, for using the sword unlawfully, though *conscientiously*, in a way of *Religious zeal*. *Paul's mad zeal* was *conscientious*. A *mad conscience* had need be restrained.

Deut. 13. 13.

'3. *Magistrates* as well as Masters and Fathers of Families may make, and therefore execute Laws against an erroneous *conscience*. They may confirm *Gods judicial Laws*, which punished *Idolatry*, and therefore an erroneous *conscience*.

'4. Negligence is punishable without exception,
'and

'and *conscience* is negligent when a man sins. *Adam*
'his *conscience* was negligent in the act, though not
'in the habit, when he first sinned, and accordingly
'punished. A negligent and corrupt Judge is pun-
'ished, though ignorant. A corrupt *conscience* is
'a corrupt Judge. *Conscientia est testis, judex &*
'*videt*..

5. 'God does punish Sins of *Conscience* and *Magi-* Deut. 17. 19.
'*strates* are *Gods Vicegerents* and not restrained in this 2 Chron. 19.
'respect. 6.

'6. *Magistrates* under the Law did punish sins of Ex. 32. 4.
'*Conscience*; and Law is not changed in this re- Deut. 13. 13.
'spect.

'7. Men may commit murders, persecute and deso- Joh. 16. 2.
'late the *Church* in a way of *conscience*, therefore Act. 26. 9.
'they may be punished for Sins of *conscience*. Men Rom. 10. 2.
'may be punished in reference to sins of the *mind*, and
'why not in reference to sins of *conscience* also? Mad
'men having not the use of a rational mind are not
'punishable. A *conscience* is a power of the mind,
'whereby we discern the rule and judg of our actions
'and conformity thereunto. The *Soul*, *mind* and
'*conscience* are punished immediately by God, the
'body immediately by man. *Conscience* is formally
'punished, though mediately, as well as formally; the
'subjects of heat from fire, though mediately by
'the ayr. A murderous heretical *conscience* had need be
'corrected, not directed only. *Meliores ducit amor,*
'*plures tamen corrigit timor.*

'9. If *Direction* be not sufficient, then *correcti-* 2 Tim. 3. 16.

The Non-Conformists Plea

'*on* is to be applyed to *Conscience* to the whole
'*man*.

1 Pet. 3. 10. '10. All Disobedience is to be corrected without
11.
1 Tim. 1. 9. 'exception.

Heb. 10. 22. '11. Conscience is but a natural power of the
Tit. 1. 15, 16. 'Soul, and therefore corrigible, as other natural pow-
'ers offending as well as the affections and the will
'and the mind, &c. Men may *conscienciously* neglect
'to hear the *Church*, yea persecute the *Church con-*
'*scienciously*, which is worse. Men may be punish-
'ed as contemptuous and wilful, affecting igno-
'rance, morally mad. A master of a Family cor-
'rupted had need be corrected rather then others,
'because so many do depend on his integrity. A
'Drunkard that is wont to be mischievous, and yet
Act. 23. 14. 'follows the cups, deserves *Pythacus* his Law, a dou-
'ble punishment. If the sworn *Jews* had kil'd *Paul*,
'they had murdered him in *Conscience*. *A rod is for*
'*the fools back*, and *conscience* is naturally *foolish*. A
'*conscience* that serveth lusts, is contemptuous,
Tit. 3. 3. 'wilfully ignorant, affecting ignorance, and natural-
2 Pet. 2. 3. 5. 'ly *conscience* does serve lusts. The *Thief* and the
Tit. 3. 2. 3. 'Adulterer may have such a *conscience* as to *think*
Psal. 50. 29. 'that *God* is like to them. *Heathens* have worshiped
'*God* by *adulterous prostitutions*. Men are in a sense
'*conscienciously* criminal, when *conscience* permitteth
'the perpetration of crimes, not only when it com-
'mands. If a corrupt *conscience* maketh *Gods* House
'a den of thieves, it is meet it should be whipt out.
'If *conscience* be a den for *thieves* and a shelter for
'murderers, it must not be tolerated. *Gods* own *Tem-*
'ple must not secure such.

'13. Mi-

'13. Ministers are to punish *conscience*.

2 Cor. 10. 5.
6.

'14. If *conscience* is not to be corrected, it is be-
'cause it is ignorant, or because there is some good-
'ness in it, or for some other reason; But no such
'consideration does excuse it; Not the first, for there
'is greatest ignorance in the greatest sins, yet they are
'the greatest Sins. There is more ignorance of some
'high principles in sins against known principles, then
'in sins that are called sins of ignorance. The more
'knowledg the less sin, therefore the more igno-
'rance the more sin. It appears that the will follows
'the intellect in mad-men. The Will doth not act
'like the Appetite of a brute. All lusts are lusts of
'ignorance. True Knowledg doth hinder Sin, be-
'cause it doth forbid Sin, and the Will cannot but
'follow the ultimate dictate of the intellect. *Om-*
'*nis malus est stultus omnis peccans est ignarus. Igno-*
'*rancia juris non excusat.* Ignorance deserves pity,
'yet it doth not excuse from punishment. Not the
'second, there is some goodness in a *heathens consci-*
'*ence.* *Godliness* in truth according to the Gospel
'doth not exempt from punishment. Conscience so
'far as it argues a good man, renders one the more
'worthy of regard, but not free from punish-
'ment. *Qui parit culpis presentibus, vitia transmittit ad*
'*posteror.*

Luk.

The Non-Conformists Plea, &c.

Luk. 19. 22.

Out of thine own mouth will I judg thee,
thou wicked Servant.

Rom. 2. 1.

Therefore thou art inexcusable, oh Man who-
soever thou art that judgest : for where-
in thou judgest another, thou condemnest
thy self, for thou that judgest doest the
same things.

Jer. Burroughs Iren. p. 215. l. 28.

The Lord may justly judg us out of our
own mouths.

F I N I S.
